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Business Integration Committee ♦ September 23, 2014

This is a newly formed committee aimed at exploring the specific hiring needs of employers in order to effectively impact training curriculums.

Present: Dana Hice-DePugh (MCTS), Scott Needham (Princeton Air), Lorraine Allen, (TCNJ), Michael Marchetti (ManufactureNJ Talent Network), Juergen

Staff: Maribel Duarte, Beverly Mills

- Beverly Mills welcomed the group and the briefly discussed the purpose of the meeting
- Round-table introductions were made
- Approval of 7/2/14 minutes: Scott Needham (1st motion), Dana Hice-DePugh (2nd motion);

Beverly asked Lorraine Allen, Regional Director of the Small Business Development Center at the College of New Jersey, to discuss conversations she's had with manufacturers voicing their concerns about the lack of a skilled workforce in our local. A "back to basics" door-to-door approach was taken to ascertain the. Consistent points were as follows:

- Common complaint among employers is lack of a proper trained workforce
- Workforce is aging out – need for younger, skilled employees to take their place
- Manufacturing still suffers from a perception problem
- Strategic Planning must take place through partnerships with employers and local educational entities

Juergen of KNF Neuberger located in Hamilton, New Jersey expressed much concern over the current state of the lack of a trained workforce in this industry. Points discussed were:

- Students lack the technical aptitude and are not trained properly
- Schools and counselor focus on college as the only option
- 2006-2013 52% of graduates found a job. Seven years later out of that 52% data showed 40% could have obtained their job with a high school diploma and 48% were unemployed
- Due to lack of skilled workforce KNF cut manpower and purchases more from overseas
- There are only three Vocational Technical School programs left in New Jersey
- Vocational Schools need a machine shop program

Scott Needham asked if a national model has been identified to replicate best practices on a local level. How do we begin working with a school and counselors to shift focus to students who want to go into this field and not college.

Michael Marchetti discussed NJIT and their focus on the middle school. NJIT endorses “Dream it, Do it” which had been launched by the Manufacturing Institute. “Dream it, Do it” works to change the perception of the industry and inspire youth go pursue manufacturing careers. The program is currently in 32 states so far. He also discussed the activities planned for Advanced Manufacturing Week starting October 3rd.

Before the close of the meeting Juergen reiterated the following:

- The importance of a school that will offer the correct training
- The program must be developed through the collaboration of local employers with educators
- Leadership must also come from the school districts to assist (Principals, Counselors must be on board)
- Tap into national leadership

NEXT MEETING: TBD